

BHAT

Mental Health Court

Subcommittee Meeting

Thursday, December 7, 2023

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Mental Health Court
3. Discussion & Updates
4. Next Steps
5. Next Meeting

Introductions

- Shan Chen
- Aniko Renee
- Chris Shea
- Dan Slade
- Ebony Belt
- Kristin Voto
- Laura Stewart Webb
- Tammy Loewe
- Ebony Belt

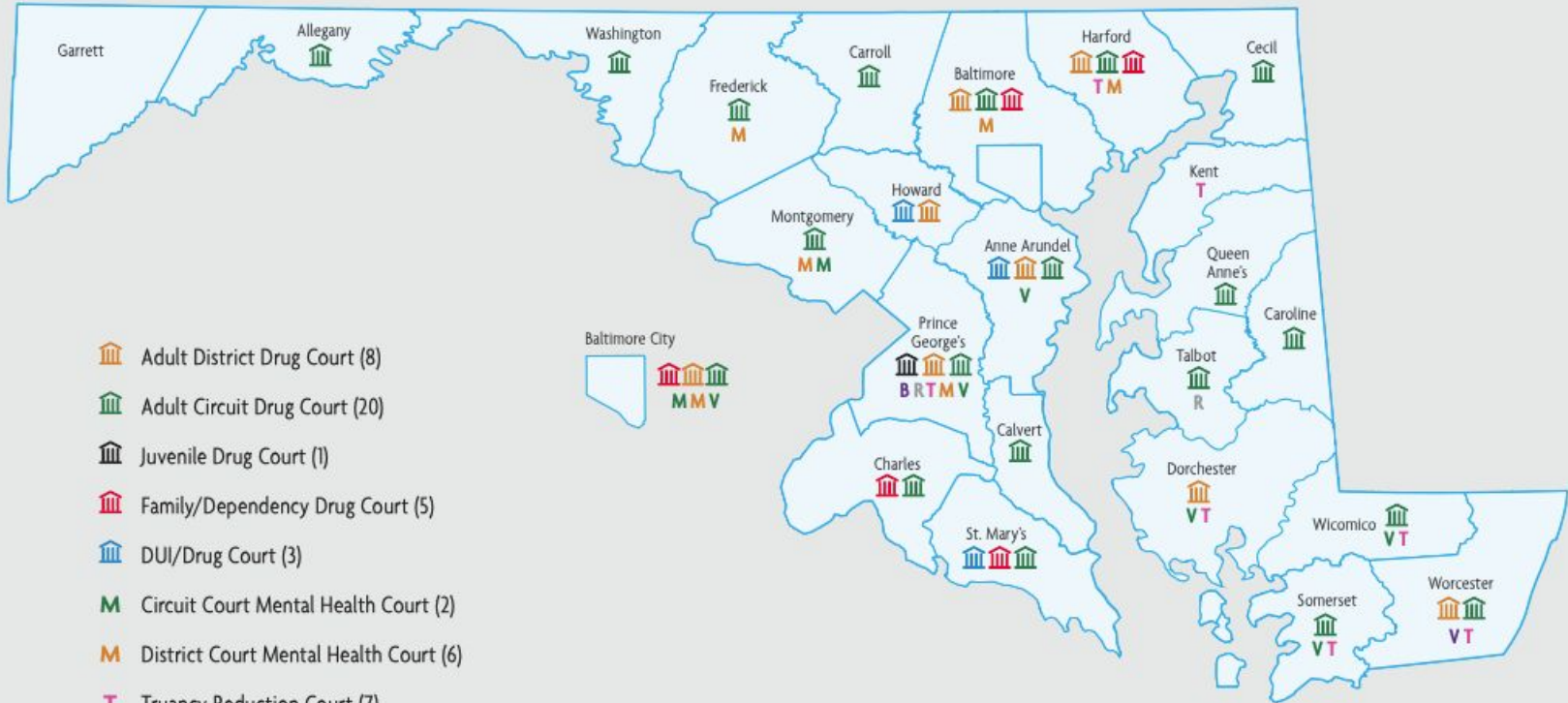
Mental Health Court







- A Mental Health Court is a specialized court docket established for defendants with mental illness that substitutes a problem-solving approach for the traditional adversarial criminal court processing.
- Participants are identified through mental health screening and assessments and voluntarily participate in a judicially supervised treatment plan developed jointly by a team of court staff and mental health professionals. (Justice Center, Bureau of Justice Assistance)
- The overarching goal of the Mental Health Court is to decrease the frequency of participants contacts with the criminal justice system by providing participants with judicial leadership to improve the social functioning, employment linkage, housing needs, treatment, and support services of participants.
- Mental Health Courts rely on individualized treatment plans and ongoing judicial monitoring to address both the mental health needs of offenders and public safety concerns of communities. These courts also seek to address the underlying problems that contribute to criminal behavior, and to assist with the avoidance of recurring correctional visits, as well as to overall lower the recidivism of this population.

Source: [Maryland Courts - Problem Solving Courts](#)

Mental Health Court (continued)

Operational Problem-Solving Courts in Maryland



-  Adult District Drug Court (8)
-  Adult Circuit Drug Court (20)
-  Juvenile Drug Court (1)
-  Family/Dependency Drug Court (5)
-  DUI/Drug Court (3)
-  Circuit Court Mental Health Court (2)
-  District Court Mental Health Court (6)
-  Truancy Reduction Court (7)
-  Re-Entry Court (2)
-  Veterans Court (7)
-  Back on Track (1)



Discussion & Updates

- Dan spoke with the States Attorney office for Calvert County as well as with Judge Saunders, who runs their mental health (MH) docket.
 - Calvert County does not have a MHC but rather a MH docket, which provides them with more flexibility. It is located within the district court.
 - It takes them 1 hour a month to prepare for the docket. Judge Saunders writes a memo to all lawyers with cases and gives them an update on where the cases stand. Despite operating with no funding, they report that it is successful. Their MH docket has done over 300 cases in the last year.
 - Dan believes a MH docket similar to Calvert County's would be the most directly correlated to St. Mary's County, due to the size.
 - We were welcomed to attend the next MH docket, which takes place on the last Wednesday of each month. Tammy and Chris can coordinate someone to attend. More updates to follow.
- Chris Shea suggested involving the LEAD program to reduce the amount of MH cases in the long run

Next Steps

- Arrange for subcommittee and/or SMCHD members to attend the next Calvert County MH Docket on December 27
- Coordinate meeting between Judge Saunders and Judge Chesser (Shan)
- Reach out to St. Mary's County State's Attorney Office, and potentially coordinate a date to meet with Calvert County's SA office (Tammy)
- Continue to work on the 2023 MHC Draft Report
 - Laura will provide qualitative information to include
 - Shan will reach out to former MHC subcommittee members for assistance and feedback in writing. If you would like to help writing, please email [Shan](#).

Next Meeting

- Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 9:00-10:00 AM.